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BRIEF

# 138 75

**Secret**

1. SYRIA: SYRIA'S SHARP DENUNCIATION OF THE SINAI ACCORD MAY BE DESIGNED MORE TO DISARM PRESIDENT ASAD'S INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL CRITICS THAN TO SCORE EITHER THE US OR EGYPT.4

A STATEMENT ISSUED AFTER AN EXTRAORDINARY MEETING ON THURSDAY OF BAATH PARTY LEADERS, PRESIDED OVER BY PRESIDENT ASAD, TOOK THE AGREEMENT APART FOR:4

-ENDING, FOR ALL PRACTICAL PURPOSES, THE STATE OF WAR BETWEEN EGYPT AND ISRAEL.4

-FAILING TO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT OTHER ARAB INTERESTS.4

-COMPROMISING ARAB UNITY, THEREBY ENCOURAGING ISRAELI INTRANSIGENCE IN DEALING WITH SYRIA, JORDAN, AND THE PALESTINIANS.4

-ALLOWING AN UNWANTED AMERICAN PRESENCE AND MORE DIRECT ROLE IN THE AREA.4

//CRITICISM OF EGYPT AND PRESIDENT SADAT IS LARGELY IMPLIED RATHER THAN DIRECT. COMING ONLY HOURS AFTER PRESIDENT ASAD'S MEETING ON WEDNESDAY WITH SECRETARY KISSINGER, HOWEVER, THE

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STATEMENT WAS MOST LIKELY INTENDED TO EXPRESS SYRIAN DISSATISFACTION WITH THE EFFORTS OF THE US, AND PROBABLY EGYPT AND SAUDI ARABIA AS WELL, TO ENSURE THAT DAMASCUS OBTAINED SOMETHING TANGIBLE IN THE SINAI ACCORD.//4

ASAD MAY HAVE CHOSEN THE BAATH PARTY AS THE VEHICLE TO ISSUE THE DENUNCIATION IN ORDER TO DEFUSE INTERNAL PRESSURES ON HIM TO SPEAK OUT MORE DIRECTLY AGAINST THE AGREEMENT. IF SO, HE MAY BE TRYING TO BUY TIME TO SEE WHAT DEVELOPS ON THE NEGOTIATING FRONT BEFORE THE MANDATE OF THE UN FORCES ON THE GOLAN HEIGHTS COMES UP FOR RENEWAL IN LATE NOVEMBER.4

SYRIAN FOREIGN MINISTER KHADDAM SAID, IN FACT, THAT SYRIA HAD FELT COMPELLED TO ISSUE THE STATEMENT BECAUSE OF THE "SEVERELY DISTURBED STATE OF ARAB PUBLIC OPINION."4

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WE BELIEVE THAT ASAD HAS NOT YET GIVEN UP

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HOPE OF OBTAINING ANOTHER ISRAELI PULLBACK ON THE GOLAN,  
ALTHOUGH HE MAY BE DISSATISFIED WITH THE LACK OF CONCRETE  
ASSURANCES THAT SYRIAN-ISRAELI NEGOTIATIONS WILL START SOON.4

THE MOST SIGNIFICANT POINT IN THE COMMUNIQUE MAY BE SYRIA'S  
ATTEMPT TO EXPLOIT CURRENT FRUSTRATIONS AMONG BOTH THE PALESTINIANS  
AND JORDANIANS IN HOPE OF NUDGING THEM CLOSER TO COOPERATION WITH  
25X1 SYRIA. [REDACTED]

2. FEDAYEEN: TWO OF THE FEDAYEEN GROUPS THAT HAVE GENERALLY  
SUPPORTED A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT IN THE MIDDLE EAST--THE SYRIAN-  
CONTROLLED SAIQA ORGANIZATION AND THE MARXIST-ORIENTED POPULAR  
DEMOCRATIC FRONT FOR THE LIBERATION OF PALESTINE--HAVE BEEN UNUSUALLY  
FORCEFUL IN THEIR CRITICISM OF THE NEW EGYPTIAN-ISRAELI  
AGREEMENT. UNLIKE SPOKESMEN FOR FATAH, THE LARGEST COMMANDO GROUP,  
THEY HAVE DIRECTLY ATTACKED EGYPT AND PRESIDENT SADAT.4

THE OUTSPOKENNESS REFLECTS THE RAPIDLY GROWING FRUSTRATION  
AMONG LESS RADICAL FEDAYEEN LEADERS. THEY PRIVATELY ACCEPTED  
LAST YEAR'S EGYPTIAN AND SYRIAN INTERIM AGREEMENTS AS NECESSARY  
STEPS TOWARD NEGOTIATIONS INVOLVING THE PALESTINIANS, BUT NOW

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THEY ARE IRRITATED BECAUSE EGYPT HAS ENDORSED A SECOND ACCORD WITHOUT EXPLICIT PUBLIC GUARANTEES THAT ISRAEL WILL EVER MAKE CONCESSIONS TO OR EVEN NEGOTIATE WITH THE PALESTINIANS.4

LEADERS OF SAIQA AND THE DEMOCRATIC FRONT PRESUMABLY WERE EMBOLDENED TO ATTACK EGYPT BY THE KNOWLEDGE THAT SYRIA AND THE SOVIET UNION ARE CRITICAL OF THE NEW AGREEMENT. LEADERS OF THE DEMOCRATIC FRONT REGULARLY CONSULT WITH SOVIET EMBASSY OFFICIALS ON POLICY MATTERS, AND SAIQA LEADERS—LIKE THE PRO-SYRIA PRESS IN BEIRUT WHICH HAS CONDEMNED THE AGREEMENT—ALMOST ALWAYS REFLECT SYRIAN POLICY.4

THE DEMOCRATIC FRONT, WHICH FOR SEVERAL MONTHS HAS BEEN INCHING TOWARD A POLICY LINE INDEPENDENT OF FATAH, HAS DONE THE MOST TO TRANSLATE ITS UNHAPPINESS INTO CONCRETE OPPOSITION. ON SEPTEMBER 1, THE GROUP ASSEMBLED REPRESENTATIVES OF LEBANON'S 16 PALESTINIAN REFUGEE CAMPS TO DEMONSTRATE OPPOSITION TO THE SINAI ACCORD AT SEVERAL ARAB EMBASSIES IN BEIRUT. THE ORGANIZATION ALSO HELPED ORGANIZE THE GENERAL STRIKE BY PALESTINIANS IN LEBANON'S MAJOR CITIES ON SEPTEMBER 2.4

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THESE INITIATIVES HAVE CREATED A MAJOR PROBLEM FOR PALESTINE LIBERATION ORGANIZATION AND FATAH CHIEF YASIR ARAFAT. WHAT WAS ORIGINALLY ONLY IRRITATING OPPOSITION TO HIS POLICIES BY FEDAYEEN "REJECTIONISTS" HAS GROWN TO INCLUDE THE DISAFFECTION OF IMPORTANT ELEMENTS IN SAIQA AND THE DEMOCRATIC FRONT AND WIDESPREAD DISILLUSIONMENT WITHIN FATAH AND AMONG NON-FEDAYEEN ELEMENTS OF THE PLO.4

ARAFAT'S RELATIVELY CONCILIATORY POLICIES HAVE LONG BEEN CRITICIZED BY FATAH FIELD COMMANDERS, WHO, DESPITE THE RISK OF ISRAELI RETALIATION, WOULD LIKE TO INITIATE MORE CROSS-BORDER ATTACKS ON ISRAEL. THE RADICAL FEDAYEEN PHILOSOPHY OF REJECTING ANY SETTLEMENT WITH ISRAEL IS MAKING HEADWAY AMONG THESE OFFICERS AND AMONG THE SECOND-LEVEL PALESTINIAN LEADERS WHO RUN THE SO-CALLED "POPULAR ORGANIZATIONS" WITHIN THE PLO.4

THE CYNICISM OF THESE GROUPS HAS GROWN—AND ARAFAT'S PRESTIGE HAS DIMINISHED—SINCE HIS WIDELY PUBLICIZED APPEARANCE BEFORE THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY LATE LAST YEAR. AT THAT TIME, ARAFAT RAISED PALESTINIAN EXPECTATIONS, BUT HE HAS BEEN UNABLE

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TO PRODUCE ANYTHING CONCRETE FOR THEM.4

DESPITE THIS POPULAR DISENCHANTMENT, ARAFAT APPEARS TO BE IN LITTLE DANGER OF BEING REPLACED AS HEAD OF THE PLO OR FATAH. THE REJECTIONISTS ARE STILL ONLY A SMALL MINORITY, AND NONE OF THE OTHER LESS RADICAL LEADERS HAS COME UP WITH A PRACTICAL ALTERNATIVE TO ARAFAT'S POLICIES.4

IN THE PAST WEEK, ARAFAT HAS BEGUN AN EFFORT TO DEAL WITH HIS PREDICAMENT BY SEIZING THE INITIATIVE FROM HIS CRITICS, WHILE AT THE SAME TIME HOLDING TO THE ESSENTIALS OF HIS POLICIES. IN PARTICULAR, HE IS TRYING TO OBSCURE HIS CONTINUED WILLINGNESS TO COOPERATE WITH EGYPT AND SYRIA IN A BARRAGE OF RHETORIC THREATENING ISRAEL, AND CALLING FOR ARAB UNITY.4

ARAFAT HAS EVEN CALLED ON THE REJECTION FRONT TO RALLY TO THE PLO LEADERSHIP "IN ORDER TO CONFRONT THE EMERGING SITUATION THAT THE PALESTINIAN REVOLUTION IS FACING." HE KNOWS THAT THIS WILL NOT BRING THE RADICALS INTO LINE, BUT PROBABLY CALCULATES THAT THEIR FAILURE TO RESPOND WILL ENABLE HIM TO DISTRIBUTE THE BLAME FOR THE PALESTINIANS' POOR PERFORMANCE IN CONFRONTING

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THE NEW SINAI ACCORD.4

ARAFAT IS ALSO ATTEMPTING TO RE-ESTABLISH HIS ACTIVIST CREDENTIALS IN PREPARATION FOR THE NEXT MEETING OF THE PALESTINE NATIONAL COUNCIL, NOW SCHEDULED FOR MID-NOVEMBER. ALTHOUGH THIS MEETING OF THE PLO'S PARLIAMENTARY ARM MAY BE POSTPONED, ARAFAT AT SOME POINT WILL BE OBLIGED TO PRODUCE A REPORT OF PROGRESS MADE, OR NOT MADE, SINCE THE LAST SESSION IN JUNE 1974. HE WILL FACE A CHALLENGE FROM RADICALS HOPING TO FORCE ABANDONMENT OF LAST YEAR'S POLICY STATEMENT HINTING AT EVENTUAL PALESTINIAN ACCEPTANCE OF A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT.4

//IN ADDITION TO SOLICITING FEDAYEEN UNITY, ARAFAT HAS CALLED FOR AN EARLY ARAB SUMMIT TO DEVISE A STRATEGY FOR "COUNTERING AMERICAN INITIATIVES." A SUMMIT ALMOST CERTAINLY WOULD DO NOTHING TO LIFT THE PALESTINIANS OUT OF THEIR CURRENT MALAISE, BUT THE CALL FOR A MEETING THAT IS LIKELY TO BE HELD ANYWAY WILL PROVIDE AT LEAST AN ILLUSION OF MOMENTUM.4

TO OFFSET THE STRAIN IN PALESTINIAN-EGYPTIAN RELATIONS CREATED BY THE NEW SINAI ACCORD, PLO SPOKESMEN ARE TAKING CARE

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NOT TO OFFEND THE SYRIANS, AND ARE WORKING—AT LEAST  
SUPERFICIALY—TOWARD IMPLEMENTATION OF PRESIDENT ASAD'S SIX-MONTH-  
OLD PROPOSAL FOR A "JOINT PALESTINIAN-SYRIAN POLITICAL AND MILITARY  
COMMAND." THE FOURTH SESSION OF THE WORKING GROUP CONSIDERING  
WAYS TO IMPLEMENT THE PROPOSAL MET IN DAMASCUS LATE LAST WEEK.4

FUTURE SYRIAN POLICY TOWARD MIDDLE EAST NEGOTIATIONS WILL  
BE THE SINGLE MOST IMPORTANT FACTOR IN DETERMINING PALESTINIAN  
POLICY. THE LEBANESE-BASED FEDAYEEN GROUPS AND THE SYRIAN-BASED  
PALESTINE LIBERATION ARMY, THE PLO'S CONVENTIONAL MILITARY FORCE,  
BOTH DEPEND ON SYRIAN GOODWILL FOR THE SUPPLY AND TRANSIT OF ARMS.  
IN ADDITION, THE PLO DEPENDS HEAVILY ON DAMASCUS FOR INTERNATIONAL  
POLITICAL SUPPORT, AS IN ITS EFFORT TO EXPEL ISRAEL FROM THE UN.  
AS A RESULT, THE PRINCIPAL PALESTINIAN LEADERS DARE NOT DEVIATE  
TOO FAR FROM THE SYRIAN POLICY LINE.4

SO LONG AS DAMASCUS IS RESERVED IN ITS CRITICISM OF EGYPT  
AND HOLDS OUT HOPE FOR PROGRESS IN NEGOTIATIONS, THEREFORE,  
ARAFAT WILL BE FREE TO PURSUE HIS PREFERRED STRATEGY OF PRESERVING  
HIS LINKS TO EGYPT. ARAFAT IS ANGERED AT SADAT'S WILLINGNESS TO

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ACT WITHOUT REGARD FOR PALESTINIAN INTERESTS, BUT ALSO IS IMPRESSED WITH CAIRO'S DEMONSTRATED ABILITY TO MAKE GAINS THROUGH NEGOTIATIONS.4

IN ADDITION, HE IS MINDFUL OF THE PENALTIES THE PALESTINIANS HAVE PAID FOR OFFERING NEEDLESSLY ANTAGONISTIC CRITICISM IN THE PAST, AND APPRECIATIVE OF EGYPT'S POTENTIAL TO HELP OFFSET ANY FUTURE SYRIAN ATTEMPTS TO EXERCISE GREATER CONTROL OVER THE FEDAYEEN.4

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AMONG THE RADICAL GROUPS, THE POPULAR FRONT AND THE GENERAL COMMAND HAVE ENGAGED IN INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM—PARTICULARLY HIJACKINGS—AND COULD DO SO AGAIN. RECENTLY, HOWEVER, THEY, LIKE THE LESS RADICAL GROUPS, HAVE EMPHASIZED CROSS-BORDER ATTACKS ON ISRAEL OUT OF A CONVICTION THAT SUCH INCIDENTS WIN GREATER SUPPORT FROM THE PALESTINIAN MASSES AND ARAB GOVERNMENTS.4

FEDAYEEN OF ALL STRIPES HAVE ALREADY STEPPED UP THEIR ATTACKS ON ISRAEL, AND SEEM LIKELY TO CONTINUE TO DO SO, DESPITE THE INCREASED FREQUENCY OF ISRAELI STRIKES AT FEDAYEEN BASES THROUGHOUT LEBANON. FOR MOST FEDAYEEN LEADERS, THIS IS THE ONLY ROAD OPEN BETWEEN ACQUIESCING IN EGYPT'S FAIT ACCOMPLI AND TURNING TO COUNTER-PRODUCTIVE INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM. 25X1

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//MEXICO: MANY POLITICAL FIGURES WHO HAVE LONG THOUGHT THAT SECRETARY OF GOVERNMENT MARIO MOYA PALENCIA WAS A SHOO-IN TO SUCCEED PRESIDENT ECHEVERRIA NEXT YEAR ARE NOW EXPRESSING DOUBTS.//4

//THE PRIMARY REASON FOR THIS CHANGE HAS BEEN THE INCREASED PUBLIC VISIBILITY OVER THE SUMMER MONTHS OF SECRETARY OF THE PRESIDENCY HUGO CERVANTES DEL RIO IN CONTRAST WITH MOYA'S LOW PROFILE. OBSERVERS INTERPRET CERVANTES' RECENT ROUND OF SPEECH- MAKING AS A SIGN OF PRESIDENTIAL FAVOR OR EVEN AN EFFORT TRY ECHEVERRIA TO CREATE PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR HIS CANDIDACY.

X1 [REDACTED] 25X1 [REDACTED]

//CERVANTES HAS INDEED BEEN GETTING MORE THAN HIS USUAL SHARE OF THE LIMELIGHT, AND IF HE CONTINUES TO HOLD CENTER STAGE OVER THE NEXT SIX WEEKS HE WOULD HAVE TO REVISE OUR OPINION THAT MOYA IS ECHEVERRIA'S CHOSEN SUCCESSOR. IN ADDITION TO THE BUILD-UP

MOYA WAS GETTING FROM THE PRESIDENT BEHIND THE SCENES EARLIER THIS YEAR. HIS SUPPORTERS IN BIG BUSINESS HAVE BEEN WEIGHING IN MORE EFFECTIVELY WITH THE RULING INSTITUTIONAL REVOLUTIONARY PARTY. RECENT GOVERNMENT DECISIONS ON THE ECONOMY HAVE HAD A CONSERVATIVE, "MOYA-LIKE" FLAVOR WHILE IN THE POLITICAL SPHERE STIFFER POSITIONS HAVE BEEN TAKEN TOWARD THE MEXICAN COMMUNIST PARTY AND THE WOULD-BE PARTIES OF THE NEW LEFT.//Y

//ALL THIS POINTS TO THE POSSIBILITY THAT ECHEVERRIA HAS BEEN SPOTLIGHTING CERVANTES JUST TO KEEP OBSERVERS GUESSING A LITTLE LONGER AND POSTPONING HIS OWN LAME DUCK STATUS UNTIL THE CHOICE IS ACTUALLY ANNOUNCED IN MID-OCTOBER.

1. PORTUGAL: THE PORTUGUESE ARMED FORCES GENERAL ASSEMBLY WILL MEET ON FRIDAY AS SCHEDULED, ACCORDING TO A SPOKESMAN FOR PRESIDENT COSTA GOMES, AND IS LIKELY TO BE THE SCENE FOR A SHOWDOWN BETWEEN SUPPORTERS AND OPPONENTS OF VASCO GONCALVES.4

ONE GOOD BAROMETER OF HOW GONCALVES' BACKERS VIEW HIS CHANCES HAS BEEN THE PUBLIC POSITION OF THE PORTUGUESE COMMUNIST PARTY, WHICH HAS VACILLATED BETWEEN FULL SUPPORT FOR GONCALVES AND CALLS FOR A COMPROMISE, DEPENDING ON GONCALVES' FORTUNES AT THE MOMENT. IN AN INTERVIEW RELEASED ON THURSDAY, COMMUNIST PARTY SECRETARY CUNHAL CALLED FOR THE WARRING MILITARY FACTIONS, THE COMMUNISTS, AND THE SOCIALISTS TO DISCUSS A COMPROMISE SOLUTION AND FORM A NEW GOVERNMENT THAT COULD BE SUPPORTED BY ALL FACTIONS. NO MENTION WAS MADE OF GONCALVES.4

CUNHAL ALSO TALKED IN THE INTERVIEW OF POSSIBLE EFFORTS BY FASCISTS ASSOCIATED WITH ANTONIO DE SPINOLA TO REGAIN POWER. INDEED, SPINOLA IS THE WILD CARD IN THE PORTUGUESE DECK WHO HAS THE CAPACITY TO ALTER SIGNIFICANTLY THE PRESENT BALANCE OF FORCES.4

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SPINOLA'S BACKERS, BOTH WITHIN PORTUGAL AND IN NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES, SEE MELO ANTUNES AS NEARLY AS OBJECTIONABLE AS GONCALVES, AND COULD DECIDE TO MAKE THEIR MOVE BEFORE ANTUNES SUCCEEDS IN USING ANTI-COMMUNIST SENTIMENT TO PUT HIMSELF IN POWER.Y

SPINOLA'S ARRIVAL IN PARIS WEDNESDAY HAS ALREADY SET OFF RUMORS IN LISBON THAT HE WILL ATTEMPT TO REGAIN POWER. WITH PORTUGAL'S ARMED FORCES DIVIDED, SPINOLA, IN LEAGUE WITH OTHER RIGHTIST FORCES, MIGHT HAVE IMPROVED PROSPECTS FOR SUCCESS. IT IS MORE LIKELY THAT HE WOULD SUCCEED ONLY IN TORPEDOING THE ATTEMPT TO OUST GONCALVES AND ROLL BACK COMMUNIST INFLUENCE.Y

MEANWHILE, PRIME MINISTER - DESIGNATE AZEVEDO HAS CONTINUED HIS EFFORTS TO FORM A GOVERNMENT, BUT WITH NO SUCCESS. ON THURSDAY, THE POPULAR DEMOCRATS MADE KNOWN THEIR CONDITIONS FOR JOINING A NEW GOVERNMENT. ECHOING THE SOCIALISTS, THEY CALLED FOR GONCALVES' REMOVAL, THE APPOINTMENT OF A MILITARY MINISTER FROM THE ANTUNES GROUP, LOCAL AND NATIONAL ELECTIONS, AND RESTRUCTURING OF THE ARMED FORCES GENERAL ASSEMBLY.Y

WITH AZEVEDO'S EFFORTS STALLED, AND SWEARING-IN CEREMONIES

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POSTPONED, THERE HAS STILL BEEN NO REAL CHANGE IN THE GOVERNMENT. GONCALVES STILL CHAIRS MEETINGS OF THE FIFTH PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT'S CABINET, AND AZEVEDO CONTINUES TO FUNCTION AS NAVY CHIEF OF STAFF. [REDACTED]

2. ROMANIA - PORTUGAL: BUCHAREST IS INTENSIFYING ITS EFFORTS TO STAKE OUT A ROLE FOR PRESIDENT CEAUSESCU AS A MEDIATOR IN THE PORTUGUESE CRISIS.4

STEFAN ANDREI, THE ROMANIAN PARTY'S SECRETARY FOR FOREIGN RELATIONS AND A CLOSE PERSONAL ADVISER TO CEAUSESCU, MADE A SUDDEN UNANNOUNCED TRIP TO LISBON EARLY THIS WEEK. HE REPORTEDLY MET WITH SOCIALIST LEADER MARIO SOARES FOR DISCUSSIONS OF PARTY AFFAIRS AND THE "POLITICAL, ECONOMIC, AND SOCIAL SITUATIONS IN BOTH COUNTRIES."4

ANDREI ALSO MET WITH COMMUNIST PARTY CHIEF CUNHAL TO DELIVER A PERSONAL MESSAGE FROM CEAUSESCU WISHING THE PORTUGUESE PARTY "FRESH SUCCESSES" IN ITS STRUGGLE. AT THE SAME TIME, HOWEVER, ANDREI

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REITERATED BUCHAREST'S FAMILIAR POSITION ON THE  
NEED FOR UNITY OF ALL PROGRESSIVE FORCES--COMMUNISTS,  
SOCIALISTS, AND THE ARMED FORCES MOVEMENT.4

ANDREI VERY LIKELY MADE A RENEWED EFFORT TO  
GAIN LISBON'S APPROVAL FOR A VISIT BY CEAUSESCU  
THE ROMANIAN LEADER PROBABLY BELIEVES THAT BY INJECTING  
HIMSELF IN SUCH SENSITIVE DISPUTES, HE WILL ENHANCE  
HIS PRESTIGE AT HOME AND BOLSTER ROMANIA'S INDEPENDENT  
FOREIGN POLICY STANCE.4

CEAUSESCU HAD WANTED TO STOP OVER IN LISBON  
EITHER BEFORE OR AFTER HIS VISIT TO CANADA ON OC-  
TOBER 8-11. THE PORTUGUESE HAVE PROBABLY BEEN TRY-  
ING TO PUT OFF THE VISIT, AND LATEST REPORTS SUG-  
GEST THAT CEAUSESCU WILL NOT ARRIVE BEFORE LATE  
OCTOBER.



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1. LAOS-USSR: THE SOVIETS HAVE SIGNIFICANTLY INCREASED THEIR PERSONNEL IN LAOS.4

[REDACTED] THE SOVIETS HAVE RECENTLY SENT 200 TO 300 ADDITIONAL PERSONNEL TO LAOS. THOSE STATIONED IN VIENTIANE, WHEN QUERIED ON THE SIZE OF THEIR MISSION, ADMIT THAT ABOUT 300 ARE THERE. THIS FIGURE IS ALMOST CERTAINLY LOW, BUT IT REPRESENTS A SUBSTANTIAL INCREASE FROM THE 75 TO 100 THAT WERE THERE SIX MONTHS AGO.4 25X1

[REDACTED]

MOSCOW'S WILLINGNESS TO PROVIDE AID IS AIMED AT IMPROVING ITS POSITION IN LAOS AT THE EXPENSE OF PEKING. DURING THE WAR, SOVIET AID WAS PRIMARILY MILITARY AND CHanneled TO THE PATHET LAO VIA NORTH VIETNAM. MOSCOW HAS HAD FEW NON-MILITARY DEALINGS WITH THE LAO COMMUNISTS IN THE LAST 13 YEARS. [REDACTED] 25X1

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2. LAOS: THE COMMUNIST-CONTROLLED SUPREME COURT OF LAOS ON SEPTEMBER 4 SENTENCED 31 FORMER HIGH-RANKING NON-COMMUNIST OFFICIALS TO SENTENCES RANGING FROM 20 YEARS IN PRISON TO DEATH FOR "CRIMES AGAINST THE PEOPLE" AND REBELLION. THOSE RECEIVING DEATH SENTENCES INCLUDE FORMER IRREGULAR FORCES COMMANDER GENERAL VANG PAO, FORMER LAO ARMY COMMANDER KOU PRASITH ABHAY, AND LONG-TIME RIGHTIST LEADERS PHOU SANANIKONE AND BOUN OUM NA CHAMPASSAK. ALL OF THOSE SENTENCED TO DEATH FLED THE COUNTRY IN MAY AND JUNE AS THE COMMUNISTS MOVED TO COMPLETE CONTROL. MOST IF NOT ALL OF THOSE RECEIVING LESSER SENTENCES HAVE ALSO FLED. THE COMMUNIST LINE SINCE THAT TIME HAS BEEN THAT THOSE WHO FLED WERE FREE TO RETURN AND WOULD BE GIVEN BACK THEIR PROPERTY. NEARLY ALL RANKING NON-COMMUNIST MILITARY AND CIVILIAN OFFICIALS WHO DID NOT FLEE THE COUNTRY HAVE BEEN MOVED DEEP INTO THE HINTERLANDS FOR LENGTHY AND HUMILIATING REINDOCTRINATION SESSIONS. THERE IS NO EVIDENCE THAT ANY HAVE BEEN EXECUTED, BUT IT SEEMS UNLIKELY THAT THEY WILL SOON BE ALLOWED TO RETURN TO VIENTIANE.

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